



U.S. EMBASSY - BAGHDAD

2008 Provincial Reconstruction Team News

-Iraq Expands Health Care with U.S. Help-

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Diyala Province, Iraq - A brand new Primary Health Clinic (PHC) began operation in Khalis September 28 following construction by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) marking the second new facility to open in Diyala in the past month with U.S. help.

The four more clinics scheduled to open in October will not only increase community access to health care, but the quality of that care in the new clinics will be greatly improved.



Iraqi health care workers in new Khalis clinic built by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Health team in Diyala is doing its part working side by side with Iraqi Health officials to implement a number of other important programs. One is the creation of a much needed provincial medical waste disposal system. Another is a provincial vaccination program designed to combat a resurgence of once rare diseases such as measles and to more accurately track the vaccinations of all the children of the province.

The latter program, combined with an Iraqi initiative to provide small medical kits to families that visit their local medical clinic, should greatly enhance the health of the children of Diyala, according to Provincial Director of Health Dr. Ali Hussein Al-Tamimi who envisions the new clinics as the backbone of an expanded and improved health care delivery system for the Province.

In addition to the six new clinics there are plans to renovate and upgrade 30 existing facilities. The renovations will offer a more professional environment in which the health care providers will work, including equipment upgrades and modernization. Dr. Ali believes that the improvements will help attract and retain health care professionals to Diyala as the security situation in the province continues to improve.

Physical plant improvements are only a part of Dr. Ali's vision, however. Dr. Ali has been working in close coordination with the Ministry of Health in Baghdad to increase the number of health care professionals practicing in Diyala, especially the numbers of specialty physicians.

According to Jerry Gardner, Health Advisor of PRT Diyala, “Dr. Ali made an immediate impact on the health care system here ensuring that existing contracts were completed for health care facilities.

“His vision for increasing access to health care facilities and attracting more health care professionals to Diyala will undoubtedly provide the people of Diyala with a medical system that they can be extremely proud of and confident in it’s ability to not only lengthen lives, but significantly impact the quality of life here,” Gardner added.

Dr. Ali’s efforts to improve living and working conditions for Diyala’s health care providers do not stop at the clinic or hospital door. He has sponsored initiatives to provide housing for the physicians near the hospitals where they work and to supply secure transportation between work and home.

Another ongoing initiative is to increase the diagnostic capabilities in the Province’s major hospitals through the purchase of four new CT scanners, repairs to an existing older scanner, and the purchase of new laboratory equipment at the Women and Children’s hospital in Baqubah.

These additions will permit Diyala’s physicians to provide early diagnosis of potentially debilitating medical problems such as diabetes and growth hormone deficiencies in children.